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Behind and beyond are old beliefs that are still alive. A man can lay upon a piece of land, when he is dying, an oath that binds his heirs to hold on to it for ever, and will destroy anyone who sells it out of the family—an entail with the sanction of magic. And then old homesteads on the Kano plains sheltering behind euphorbia hedges contain the bones of the deceased owner, who is buried under the floor of his hut. So consolidation may ask the son to exchange not merely a field of maize, but the bones of his father, the terrestrial anchor of his father's spirit. No wonder it is often too much to ask, and that politicians find these deep fires easy to fan.

To reach Nyabondo we climbed a small escarpment, the beginning of the Kipsigis hills, left the car beside a track and walked to the farm of a young, pleasant-mannered school supervisor called James Onyango, one of the leaders of the enclosure movement. We sat under a tree near his new tin-roofed modern bungalow, above a shallow valley with a stream. The country here is gently rolling and thickly dotted with roofs of homesteads. Many people had gathered in a circle; the women sat together in bright cottons and gay head-scarves, plump and glossy, most of them with grave-faced, round-eyed babies sleeping in their arms or crawling about the grass beside them. This question of land touches the women at the core. James Onyango told his story in English.

'The idea of exchanging gardens came to us two years ago; we had heard of it in other places; most of us were interested, and asked the Government to advise. We held a meeting and agreed unanimously to consolidate, all of us within the Kadianga clan, fifty-nine families. In our clan are three sub-clans; each appointed three men to form a committee. Each of these three was a *m'guru*—an elder whose task is to look after the land, and one of these was made the president.

'We started to exchange our gardens, and at first everything was fair. Then came elections for the Legislative Council and the District Council. The candidates thought they would gain popularity by speaking against the land schemes. They campaigned among the people, and some listened. They had clever ways. In each sub-location they had an agent who

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would write to the papers, or sign letters written for him, saying the people were against these schemes. And so some of us became confused. In this location we still wanted to exchange land, but some of our neighbours turned against it, and we had to stop.

'At the end of 1958 the opposition became very strong and the D.C. called a meeting to decide. The opposition staged another trick. They packed the meeting with supporters from other locations, even women who knew nothing about it at all. This was a noisy and a difficult *baraza*. Even with these methods, when it came to a vote the meeting was evenly divided. The casting vote was left to the D.C. He decided against it, and so the scheme was closed.

'We who had always been in favour were greatly harmed. We wanted the Government to bring water from the river, and surveying had already started for a piped scheme. Some of the elders went to the D.C. to ask him to change his mind, but he refused. In January, he agreed to send two people to Elgon Nyanza to see what was being done there. They saw it all, and when they returned we elected *liguru* after the pattern of the Elgon people. We called everyone together in groups, men, women and children, to plant hedges round the *shambas* that had been exchanged. I myself exchanged four pieces, and in some cases I paid money and cattle to get all my land in one piece. We managed to plant hedges round two or three *shambas* a day. Then we went to the D.C. and told him what we had done and asked him to send an officer to help us plan the use of our *shambas*. When he heard what we had done, he agreed.

'Now we have enclosed all the land of our clan and we want to have it registered. We asked the D.C., but there were still six men who refused, and the D.C. would not do it until everyone agreed. In the last few days two more have agreed, so now there are only four against it. When they agree we shall have titles to our land and then no one can upset the work we have done.'